



Illinois Department of Natural Resources

One Natural Resources Way Springfield, Illinois 62702-1271
<http://dnr.state.il.us>

Pat Quinn, Governor
Marc Miller, Director

December 10, 2014

Mr. Peter Bullock
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Chicago District, Regulatory Branch
231 South LaSalle Street, Suite 1500
Chicago, Illinois 60604-1437

Re: Environmental Assessment – Ft. Sheridan Restoration, Lake County, Illinois

Dear Mr. Bullock:

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (Department) has reviewed the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the above mentioned project. Non-Federal sponsors include Lake County Forest Preserve District, Openlands, the Town of Ft. Sheridan, and the City of Lake Forest. Major components of the project include the restoration of bluffs, ravines, dunes, and lacustrine habitat within the project area. Invasive species will be removed, along with reestablishing native plants, and installation of offshore habitat to enhance the Lake Michigan fishery.

State-listed Plant Species

The Illinois Natural Heritage Database (INHD) indicates numerous state-listed plant species are located within the project area. A list of these species is included in the attached EcoCAT Report. The Department understands that one of the main objectives of the project is to restore biodiversity and thus benefit state-listed plant species. The Department commends you for these efforts. The Department recommends mitigation measures be put into place during the restoration process to preserve the existing rare plant species. Such measures might include avoiding disturbance of areas populated with these plants, collecting seed for later planting, or storage and replacement of topsoil containing seed. If harm to some listed plants cannot be avoided during the restoration process, please be aware that landowner permission is needed to “take” listed plants under the *Illinois Endangered Species Protection Act* [520 ILCS 10/11].

Please contact Brad Semel (815-675-2386 ext. 216) with the Department’s Heritage Division for more information on enhancement and mitigation of state-listed plant species.

State-listed Animals

Records of the state-threatened mudpuppy (*Necturus maculosus*) occur in Lake Michigan. Opportunities exist within this project to provide habitat and aid in the recovery of this species in Lake Michigan. The Department recommends final project designs include rock and log structures which provide favorable habitat for this species.

Records of the state-threatened banded killifish (*Fundulus diaphanous*) exist within the littoral zone of Lake Michigan in the project area. The Department recommends major disturbance

activities be limited in this area during the primary spawning time of this species, April 15 through July 31. Overall, the project should enhance habitat for this species and not result in negative impacts.

For more information on habitat creation to enhance the Lake Michigan fishery, please contact Vic Santucci (847-294-4134) with the Department's Fisheries Division.

Illinois Natural Area Inventory Sites

Three Illinois Natural Area Inventory (INAI) sites are within the project boundaries. These include the Fort Sheridan Bluff, Fort Sheridan Site, and McCormick Ravine. These sites are classified as Categories I & II, meaning high quality natural community and natural community restorations, and specific suitable habitat for state-listed species or state-listed species relocations exist. These sites carry no special legal protection.

Nature Preserve

The Openlands Lakeshore, Bluff and Ravine Nature Preserve is within the project boundaries. Coordination with the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission (INPC) and a Management Activity Permit is necessary for work within the Nature Preserve. Please contact Kelley Neal (217-524-2415) and Steve Byers (815-678-4865) with the INPC.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment, please contact me at 217-524-0501 if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely



Nathan Grider
Biologist
Impact Assessment Section

cc: Shawn Cirton - USFWS
Kelley Neal - INPC
Steve Byers - INPC
Valerie Njapa - INPC
Vic Santucci - IDNR, ORC
Brad Semel – IDNR, ORC
Frank Veraldi – USACE

ATCH (EcoCAT Report)